

THE LIBERTY "76" BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

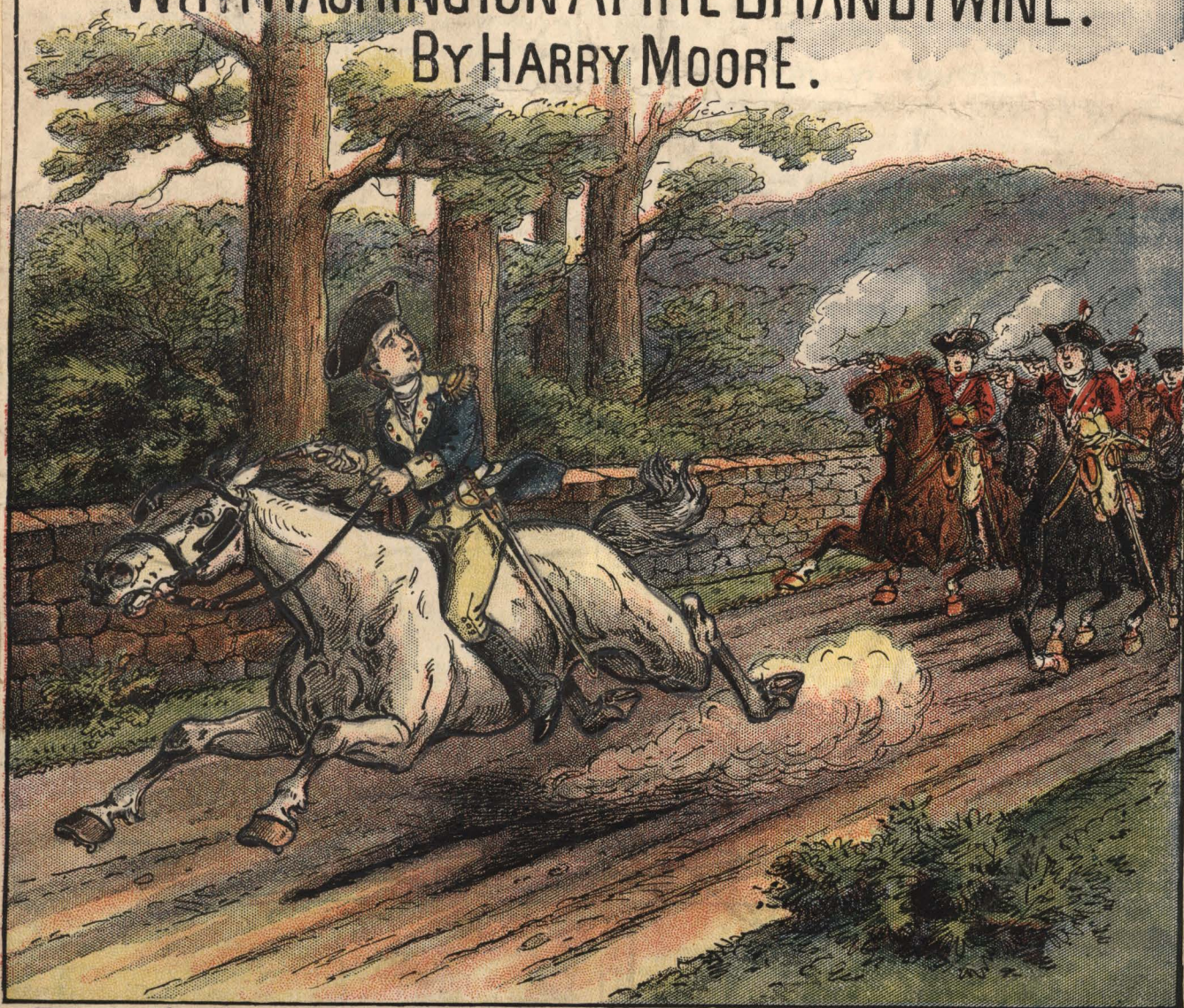
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NEW YORK, JULY 12, 1901.

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THE LIBERTY BOYS' BATTLE CRY; OR WITH WASHINGTON AT THE BRANDYWINE. BY HARRY MOORE.



They held their own, but that was all. Onward rushed pursued and pursuers. Seeing that they could not gain on Dick, the redcoats fired several shots at him from their pistols.

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NEW YORK, JULY 12, 1901.

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CHAPTER I.

A LIVELY ENCOUNTER.

It was the 10th day of September, 1777.

The patriot army, consisting of about eleven thousand men, occupied a position on the east side of Brandywine Creek at a point known as Chadd's Ford.

The British army, consisting of eighteen thousand men, two miles distant, across Brandywine Creek, to the westward.

A battle between the two armies was imminent.

General Washington, the commander-in-chief of the patriot army, had decided that the time had come to show battle.

For months he had contented himself with simply holding the British in check.

He had time and again defeated the object of General Howe, the British commander-in-chief, and that, too, without engaging in battle.

He did it by exercising strategy of the highest order.

As he had had, for the most of the time during the past two to eight months, only about eight thousand men, while the British had eighteen thousand, to have succeeded in fulfilling the enemy in the manner in which he had, was indeed a great feat.

But there was more or less of grumbling among the people.

They did not fully understand the masterly strategy of the great general.

They thought he should engage in battle with the British at every opportunity.

Many of the people were so unthinking that they did not stop to think that not only did the British outnumber the patriots nearly three to one, but that they were much better equipped in every way, and their organization was all high perfect.

The knowledge that the people were dissatisfied with the British policy was well known to Washington.

He realized that they could not be expected to understand the value of "masterly waiting" in a campaign like

And if he were to let the British army capture Philadelphia without offering battle, the people would cry out against him loudly.

Washington, however, had no intention of letting the British enter and take possession of Philadelphia without offering battle.

He felt that he scarcely could hope to win, with only eleven thousand poorly equipped and organized troops against eighteen thousand of the best equipped and organized of Great Britain, but he could make a good showing, at least, and this would have considerable effect in satisfying the people.

Washington, with his usual strategy, had chosen an admirable position.

It was indeed very strong.

The Brandywine was not large, but it was large enough to be what is known as a "military obstacle," and could only be crossed at the fords, of which there were several.

Chadd's Ford was the principal one, and behind it Washington had placed the center of his army.

This center was defended in front by a corps of artillery under Wayne.

Back a ways, on some high ground, Greene was stationed as a reserve.

Just below Chadd's Ford the Brandywine is a roaring torrent, being shut in between steep cliffs.

On top of these cliffs the Pennsylvania militia under Armstrong were placed.

To the northward the country was uneven and thickly wooded, and the right wing stretched in this direction a distance of two miles.

It was commanded by Sullivan.

Generals Washington and Greene were out, taking a survey of the situation on this beautiful September day of which we write.

"Well, I think the British will have hard work getting at us, General Greene," said the commander-in-chief, presently.

"I think so, your excellency; you have selected a very strong position."

"Yes, it is quite strong; it will be disastrous for them

to try to storm our position from the front. It would result in great loss to them."

"So it would. To my mind, the weakest point in our position is the right wing, which could be taken in flank by a long, circuitous march through the woods."

"That is my opinion also, General Greene. I have spies out, however, and should the British attempt such a movement, I shall know of it in time to checkmate it."

At this moment a youth of perhaps eighteen years approached the two generals, and saluted.

"Ah, Dick, is it you?" remarked General Washington; "well, what is the news?"

"I have come to report that there is considerable activity being manifested in the ranks of the British, your excellency," said Dick Slater, for that was the youth's name.

He was the captain of a company of youths known as "The Liberty Boys of '76," and he was in addition one of the best and most trusted spies in the patriot army.

He had been across the Brandywine spying on the British, and had just come from there to report.

"They are showing unusual activity, are they, Dick?"

There was a look of interest in the commander-in-chief's eyes.

"Yes, your excellency."

"What do they seem to be doing?"

"They are shifting their men, for the most part, and some of the men under Cornwallis, over on the Lancaster road have come over and joined Knyphausen on the main road, here in our front."

"Ah!"

The two generals looked at each other.

"I think they are getting ready to attack, General Greene," said the commander-in-chief.

Greene nodded.

"I judge you are right," he said.

"I believe I am; and the attack will not be long delayed."

"Do you think it will be made to-day?"

"I hardly expect it. Probably it will be made in the morning."

"Doubtless," agreed General Greene.

General Washington asked Dick a number of questions, and when the youth had answered, and had made his report in full, the commander-in-chief told him to return to his post, and keep a sharp watch on the British.

"Very well, your excellency," replied Dick, in response to the order, and saluting, he walked away.

He made his way northward.

He kept close down beside the creek.

Back from the creek, to the eastward were wooded hills.

On these hills the patriot flank under Sullivan was stationed.

Dick made his way along the bank of the creek a distance of perhaps a mile.

Then he came to a point where a wagon road crossed the creek.

There was a ford here.

The water was quite shallow, and a row of flat stones had been so placed that a person could walk across without getting the feet wet.

Dick had crossed here a number of times.

And it was his intention to cross here again.

He stepped upon the first stone, and made his way across.

Reaching the last stone, he leaped lightly to the shore.

As he did so, he was startled by hearing the hoarse command:

"Throw down your musket and surrender, you rebel! You are my prisoner!"

Dick had had his eyes cast downward watching, so as to keep from slipping from the stones, and getting his feet wet.

The result was that he was now taken entirely by surprise.

He looked up quickly on hearing the command.

Standing before him, and not ten feet distant, was a British soldier!

The redcoat held a musket in his hands, and it was leveled full at Dick's breast.

The youth was taken entirely by surprise.

He had not been expecting anything of this kind.

He had no idea that there was a redcoat within ten miles of the spot.

Yet here was one.

And he seemed to have the upper hand, just at that moment.

Dick realized this very forcibly.

The redcoat seemed to realize it also, and to appreciate it, for he grinned in an extremely self-satisfied manner.

"Throw down your musket!" he again cried; "throw it down, and surrender, you rascally rebel!"

Dick hesitated.

He did not feel like surrendering to the redcoat.

It would be very humiliating to do so.

He had never in his life been outwitted or overcome by one man.

He did not intend to let it be that way now, either, if he could help it.

He thought he could do so.

His brain was working with lightning-like quickness.

He had thought up, and dismissed as being impracticable, half a dozen schemes for outwitting the redcoat.

He was still thinking when the redcoat ordered him, the second time, to throw down his musket and surrender.

Dick realized that he could not put off matters much longer.

The time for the climax was near at hand.

The redcoat would not brook much more delay.

He would order Dick to surrender about one more time, and then, the youth refusing to comply, the fellow would shoot.

The youth realized this very distinctly.

Suddenly a bright thought struck him.

He acted upon it instantly.

He knew there was no time to be lost.

Suddenly he put on a look of surprise and horror.

He dropped his musket, and pointing at some imaginary object behind the redcoat, cried:

"Look out!—behind you!"

The ruse was successful.

The redcoat was thoroughly deceived.

He thought some danger threatened him from the rear.

He ducked forward, threw up his shoulders, and half turned to look behind him.

A glance showed him there was nothing there.

Instantly he realized that he had been tricked.

A curse escaped him.

He started to whirl back to face Dick.

He was too late.

The youth had improved his opportunity.

As the redcoat half turned to look behind him, Dick leaped forward.

His leap was like that of a panther.

He was upon the redcoat before the latter could turn back facing him.

Dick seized the redcoat by the throat.

The impact of his body overturned the Briton.

Down he went to the ground, with Dick on top of him.

Before Dick could compress the redcoat's throat tightly, however, the fellow gave vent to a wild yell for help.

"Help, comrades!" he cried; "this way, quick!"

Instantly Dick realized that he was still in danger.

The redcoat had comrades near at hand.

True, the Briton might be using a ruse to frighten Dick.

But Dick did not think so.

He was too much startled to do any such thing.

The cry was involuntary.

Consequently the youth felt sure there were other redcoats near.

That this was the case was soon proven.

Dick heard the crackling of underbrush.

"Coming, Jackson!" cried an excited voice.

"Then it's time I was going!" thought Dick, grimly.

He had no desire of engaging in a combat with half a dozen redcoats.

It would be too one-sided for even a youth of Dick's undoubted valor.

Then, too, he was going on a spying expedition.

He did not wish to fight.

It was his desire to keep entirely out of sight of the redcoats.

This being the case, he must get away in a hurry.

Dick gave one more, fierce squeeze upon the redcoat's throat.

Then he leaped to his feet.

He heard the sound of rushing footsteps.

They were close at hand.

He did not delay another instant.

Turning, he leaped into the timber.

At the same instant four redcoats appeared.

They saw their comrade lying prostrate on the bank of the creek.

They also caught a fleeting glimpse of Dick as he disappeared in the edge of the timber.

They rushed to their comrade.

"What does it mean, Jackson?" they cried, eagerly, excitedly.

"That I have been nearly choked to death by a rebel!" gasped Jackson, struggling to his feet.

"Don't let him escape!" he cried; "which way did he go?"

"This way," replied one, pointing in the direction in which Dick had gone.

"After him!" cried Jackson; "don't let the scoundrel escape! After him!"

Then the five leaped in the direction taken by Dick.

The youth would have to exert himself, if he escaped the redcoats, for they were all young men, and swift runners.

CHAPTER II.

INTO THE PIT.

Dick realized this fact.

He heard them coming in pursuit.

He was a very swift runner himself, however.

There were very few who were his equal in this respect.

And now he exerted himself to the utmost.

He would not be captured now, of all times.

He had been sent by the commander-in-chief to watch the British.

The British and patriot armies were facing each other, and only a couple of miles distant from each other.

They were on the verge of a great battle.

It was very important that General Washington should be kept posted regarding the movements of the British.

And Dick was determined to keep the commander-in-chief posted.

He ran with the speed of the wind.

But still behind him he could hear the sounds of his pursuers.

"They are sticking to it!" Dick thought. "Well, let them! I don't think they can catch me!"

Dick had great confidence in himself.

And he was justified in it.

He would no doubt have succeeded in getting away from the redcoats very soon, but for an accident.

Suddenly the ground gave way underneath his feet.

Dick went plunging downward.

He went down perhaps eight feet.

He was jarred considerably.

But he was not injured.

A quick glance around the excavation into which he had fallen told Dick what it was.

He had fallen into a pit, such as were sometimes made for the purpose of trapping wild beasts.

The pit had been dug, and then the opening had been covered over with brush and leaves.

It was so arranged that the instant any weight was placed upon it, the covering of brush and leaves would give way, and let the animal or whatever it might be fall into the pit.

Dick realized that he was in a dangerous situation.

The pursuing redcoats were close at hand.

They would be upon him before he could possibly get out of the pit.

What was he to do?

Dick asked himself this question and quick as a flash he thought of a course of procedure.

He would conceal himself.

He was confident the redcoats had not seen him fall into the pit.

Not knowing he was there, they would not be apt to look closely for him.

Dick threw himself down at one side of the pit, and drawing the leaves and brush to him, he covered himself over.

"This is somewhat risky," the youth thought; "but it is the best I can do."

A moment later he heard the pattering of footsteps.

The redcoats were close at hand.

"Surely there is no danger of their falling in here," said Dick to himself. "They will see the pit in time to avoid it."

But Dick was wrong.

One of the redcoats being a faster runner than his companions was a few paces in the lead.

He did not see the pit in time to enable him to stop.

The result was that he plunged headlong down into the excavation.

He alighted squarely on top of a pile of brush with which Dick had covered himself.

A cry half of fright, half of vexation escaped the redcoat.

Then he remembered his companions.

He cried out in warning to them.

"Look out, fellows," he called; "don't fall down into this pit."

He scrambled to his feet as his comrades appeared at the top of the pit.

As for Dick, he was on the anxious seat.

Would the redcoats discover him? he wondered.

It would be a wonder if they did not, he thought.

Dick was not in as much danger as might appear, however.

The redcoat who was down in the pit was, of course, anxious to get out.

The attention of his comrades, of course, was upon him.

The thought that the fugitive might have fallen into the pit never occurred to them.

Had it done so, they certainly would have discovered him.

The redcoats hardly knew how to go about getting their companion out of the pit.

Finally one lay down upon his stomach, and reaching down, grasped the hands of his comrade.

His comrades then seized hold of him and lifted him up.

As he held onto his comrade's hands with a tight grip the latter was pulled up out of the pit.

When their companion was once more among them, the redcoats discussed the situation.

"There is no use trying to follow that fellow any farther," said one.

"That's right," from another. "He had time enough to get clear away."

"So he has, curse the luck," said the one who had been called Jackson by his comrades; "he gave me a good chok

ing and I would like to have caught him so that I could get even with the fellow. Jove! I can feel his fingers on my throat yet."

Dick could not help smiling as he heard the fellow make this remark.

He felt reasonably safe now.

In a measure he could enjoy the situation.

The most disagreeable feature about the matter now, was that it delayed him.

He was anxious to get back to his post and spy on the British.

He was not kept there much longer, however.

The redcoats soon got through talking.

Then they turned and walked away.

Dick waited until they were out of hearing.

Then he threw the brush and leaves off and rose to his feet.

Dick looked up at the top of the pit.

For the first time, the thought came to him: How was he to get out?

That was the question.

And a serious one it was, too.

The more Dick took stock of the situation, the more serious it seemed.

The top of the pit was at least three feet above his head.

There was nothing in the pit that promised to be of aid in helping him to get out.

Dick knew that he could jump up and catch hold of the edge of the pit with his hands, but he doubted his ability to pull himself out.

It seemed to be his only chance, however, so he made the attempt.

He leaped up and caught hold of the edge of the pit.

The dirt crumbled away, however, and he fell back.

He tried this a number of times and at each side, with the same result in each instance.

Dick ceased these tactics and tried to think of some other plan.

His gaze fell upon the pile of brush.

In the pile were several fairly good-sized limbs.

No one of them was large enough or stiff enough to hold Dick's weight.

But an idea struck the youth.

By picking out three or four of the larger ones, and fastening them together, they would no doubt hold his weight.

Dick put this plan into execution at once.

He tied the butts of the limbs together with his handkerchief and then by interweaving the smaller branches at the top, he found on testing it, that he had something

which promised to be of assistance to him in getting out of the pit.

Dick placed the crude and improvised ladder against the wall.

Then slowly and carefully he mounted it.

It was a difficult task, but Dick, by exercising great care, finally succeeded in getting high enough up so that he could leap the rest of the way out of the pit.

"Well, I'm glad I'm out of there," murmured Dick. "I began to think for a little while that I could not get out at all."

Knowing that the redcoats had had ample time to get half way to their encampment, Dick felt safe in making speed in the same direction.

He hastened away through the timber.

Dick did not run, but walked as rapidly as he could.

Fifteen minutes later Dick came to a stop.

He gave utterance to a peculiar whistle.

It was cautious, yet quite shrill and penetrating.

He waited a few moments, and receiving no reply to his signal, he whistled again.

This time he received an answer.

"Ah! there's Bob," he murmured.

Then he made his way in the direction from which the whistle had sounded.

When Dick had gone perhaps a hundred yards, he paused.

He gave vent to another whistle.

It was answered almost immediately.

The whistle seemed to come from almost overhead.

"Ah! he's up in a tree," thought Dick.

He looked upward.

He was almost under an exceptionally large tree.

The tree had an unusually bushy top and heavy foliage.

"I'm up here, Dick," came down in a cautious tone.

"I thought so," murmured Dick.

Then in a louder tone, he called out:

"I'll be with you in a minute, old man."

Dick proceeded to climb the tree.

He was an expert at this kind of work.

A minute later, he was in the top of the tree and was greeted by a youth of about his own age.

This youth was Bob Estabrook, who was also a member of the company of "Liberty Boys of '76."

He was Dick's nearest and dearest boy friend.

Both had been in the patriot army more than a year and during that time they had worked together a great deal as scouts and spies.

They had done wonderful work.

They had been more successful than all other spies in the patriot army.

On account of this, they stood high in the regard of General Washington.

The commander-in-chief had great faith in the youths.

It was a common thing, therefore, for him to select Dick and Bob for the most dangerous and important tasks.

There had never been a time when it had been more important that a close watch should be kept upon the British, than the present.

The two armies were confronting each other, and less than two miles apart.

A battle between them was imminent.

It was very important that the movements of the British should be noted carefully, and reports sent to General Washington promptly.

And this was the work upon which Dick and Bob were engaged.

"Well, Bob, how is everything?" asked Dick.

"Oh, about as they were when you left, Dick."

"Considerable stir going on yet, eh?"

"Yes; looks a little like a hornets' nest after a stick has been run into it."

"I think there's not the least doubt that trouble is brewing, Bob."

"I guess not, Dick. I think to-morrow will see a battle in progress."

"General Washington thinks so."

"Does he?"

"Yes."

"Well, he's all ready for it, and the British will have one of the hardest fights they ever had."

"So they will, Bob, but they outnumber us nearly two to one, and it would be almost a miracle if our army defeated them."

"It's a miracle that I wish might come to pass."

"And I, too."

The youths then turned their attention to the British encampment.

"We have a good view of the British camp here, Bob."

"So we have."

At this instant there came the sharp report of a musket and a bullet cut through the leaves of the treetop and passed within six inches of Dick's head.

CHAPTER III.

"I WILL RESCUE HIM OR DIE WITH HIM!"

Dick and Bob looked at each other in blank surprise.

There was a look of alarm on their faces, too.

Had they been discovered?

Was a redcoat sharpshooter shooting at them?

It looked like it.

"Great Guns, Dick!" whispered Bob; "I fear we are in for it now!"

"It does look a bit that way!"

The youths shielded their bodies behind the limbs of the tree as much as was possible.

They tried to peer downward.

The foliage was so thick they could only here and there get glimpses of the ground.

They could see nothing of the redcoat who had fired the shot.

Presently the youths heard voices.

The voices came from almost directly beneath them.

"There's more than one, Dick!"

Dick nodded.

He made a warning gesture.

They listened intently.

They could hear and understand what was said.

"I tell you, I saw a fellow climb the tree only a few minutes ago!" said a voice.

"Are you sure?" came up in another voice.

"Of course I'm sure!"

"But your shot just now seemed to have no effect."

"I missed him. If I had hit him, it would have had some effect."

"No doubt! But I should have thought that if there is anyone up there, he would have betrayed his presence when you fired a bullet through the treetop."

"There are plenty who would never give a sign, if you plugged bullets around them for an hour. The fellow is undoubtedly a spy, and you know spies are the bravest and most daring men living."

"True; well, we'll see if we can persuade the fellow to come down."

Then the redcoat lifted up his voice.

"Hello, there, up in the treetop!" he cried; "come down out of that!"

Of course, Dick and Bob made no reply.

They would remain silent as long as possible.

They hoped that they might be able, by maintaining absolute silence and sticking it out, to dupe the redcoats into the belief that their companion had been deceived when he had thought he had seen a man climb the tree.

It was rather a forlorn hope.

Still, it was better than giving up at once, and acknowledging their presence.

If the redcoat was so certain he had seen a man climb the tree, he should prove it, for all of Dick and Bob.

They would not help him by coming down at the command of the redcoat.

The redcoat who had called out, waited a few moments. Then he called out again:

"Hello, up there! We know you are there, so you might as well come down at once, and save us the trouble of waiting."

This time, as before, there was no reply.

The redcoat waited about the same length of time that he had before, then in a louder voice than ever, and with rather a fierce tone, he cried:

"We will give you just one minute in which to come down from out that tree! If at the end of that time you have not shown yourself, we shall open fire, and riddle the top of the tree with bullets! You had better come down at once, and save us the trouble of shooting you!"

The youths looked at each other blankly.

Affairs were approaching a climax.

They could not deceive the redcoats into believing there was no one in the treetop.

If the redcoats put their threat into effect, and fired up into the treetop, they would undoubtedly succeed in wounding the youths; might even give them their death wounds.

Suddenly Bob gave a start, and almost uttered an exclamation aloud.

"Dick," he whispered; "I have an idea!"

"What is it, Bob?"

"I'll tell you. You heard that fellow say he saw a man climb the tree?"

"Yes."

"Well, he saw only one!"

"Yes; what of that?"

"Why, don't you see, Dick? If one of us goes down, the redcoats will be satisfied! They don't know there are two of us up here, and I'll go down and give myself up, and then they will take me away, and you will be left here to spy on the British!"

He was a noble-hearted youth, and was perfectly willing to give himself up in order to save Dick, and enable him to pursue the work of spying on the redcoats.

Dick hated to give his consent to this, however.

"I don't feel like doing that, Bob," said Dick; "we have always stood by each other through thick and thin, and—"

"I know, Dick, but if I don't go down and give myself up, they will fire up here and perhaps wound or kill both of us. At any rate, they will soon capture us, and it will be much better if they capture one than if they capture both."

This was true, of course, and Dick could not gainsay it.

Then, too, he realized that it was extremely important that one at least should keep watch of the British.

"I guess you are right, Bob," Dick said, slowly; "but I must insist that I go down and leave you here to keep watch of the British."

Bob would not hear to this, however.

He shook his head violently.

"No, I'm going down, Dick," he said, determinedly; "you know what General Washington wishes done better than I do, and I'll be just as good a prisoner as you could be."

He extended his hand, which Dick grasped.

"Well, if you will have it that way, Bob, go ahead!" said Dick, "but," he went on, feelingly, "rest assured that I will rescue you, old man, or die trying! Be on the lookout for me to-night!"

"I will, Dick—but be careful. Don't take too many chances for the sake of freeing me. Remember, you are too valuable to the commander-in-chief for that."

"So are you valuable to him, Bob—and to me! and to Edith, and your parents and sister!"

Edith Slater was Dick's sister, and Bob's sweetheart.

Bob's face paled slightly at mention of Edith and his parents.

"If it should happen that I should never see them again, Dick, tell them that I died for my country, and that my last thoughts were of them!" he said, his face showing the effort it was causing him to control his emotions.

"I'll tell them, Bob!—if ever it becomes necessary. But it shall not become necessary if I can help it!—and I think I can do so!"

It would be dangerous to delay longer.

The redcoats might open fire at any moment.

The youths had talked rapidly, but they thought the minute must be about up.

So Bob lifted up his voice and called out:

"Don't fire! I surrender! I'll come down!"

"That is sensible!" came up the voice of the redcoat.

There was a pleased intonation to the fellow's voice.

"I told you so!" the youths heard another voice say.

The speaker was the redcoat who had seen Dick climb the tree.

Bob started to climb down at once.

He had got a third of the way down when a thought came to him:

Had the redcoat got a good enough look at Dick to make it possible for him to know that Bob was not the one he had seen?

If he had, then Dick would be captured, after all.

Bob hoped this would not be the case.

It would be terrible if their plan should fail, after all, and both should be made prisoners.

Bob would do all he could to make the fellow think he was the person who had been seen, at any rate.

One thing in Dick's and Bob's favor was that they were dressed almost exactly alike.

Then, too, they were almost of a size.

Bob made his way downward.

He was very deliberate in his movements.

He was in no hurry to be made a prisoner.

When Bob came down far enough so that the redcoats could see him plainly, a remark by the fellow who had seen Dick climb the tree caused the youth to breathe more freely.

"That's the fellow!" was the remark made; "that's the chap!"

Bob climbed on down.

He was soon on the ground.

He found himself surrounded by perhaps a dozen redcoats.

There were altogether too many for it to be worth Bob's while to try to escape.

He could not hope to be successful.

Such an attempt would only end in failure.

It might end in his death.

So he decided to not attempt anything of the kind.

It would be better to give in gracefully, to make the best of the situation, and wait for a chance to escape later on.

Bob had great faith in Dick.

He believed that his comrade would find a way to rescue him.

"Well, my bold young rebel," said the redcoat who seemed to be the leader; "you have done well to surrender!"

He eyed the youth with interest.

"Well," replied Bob, calmly; "I didn't think it would be healthy to remain up in the tree, and let you riddle me with bullets."

The redcoat laughed, as did his companions also.

"You are right about that!" he said; "it would not have been healthy!"

The redcoats were all eyeing Bob with interest, and now one spoke up.

"By Jove! Sansom," he said; "this young fellow looks like the one I saw climb the tree, and yet he looks different in some way; I don't understand it!"

Bob's heart sank.

He feared that he would turn pale enough to attract the attention of the redcoats.

Was the plan to fail, after all?

Would the redcoats discover that he was not the one their comrade had seen climb the tree?

Bob hoped not, and he strove to retain perfect control of his facial expression.

"He looks different?" the leader asked; "what do you mean?"

"I hardly know. I got a pretty good look at the chap who climbed the tree, however, and although this fellow looks like him, he seems somewhat different in appearance."

"Nonsense! He can't look different! He's the same chap!"

"Yes, he's the same fellow," the other replied; "he looks different when close from what he did when at a little distance, that is all."

Bob breathed more freely once more.

He believed that the plan was going to succeed, after all.

"Well, you've got me; what are you going to do with me?" he asked.

The redcoat laughed.

"Don't you know what we are going to do with you?" he asked.

"No."

"Well, you are unsophisticated for a spy! Didn't your commander-in-chief tell you what would happen to you if you were captured by the enemy?"

"I didn't ask him anything about it."

"Oh, that's it. I suppose you didn't think about being captured."

"Well, to tell the truth, I did not."

"You see now, where you made your mistake then. You should have given the matter thought."

"Oh, I'm ready to abide the consequences, whatever they may be!" said Bob, quietly.

"Well, that shows the spirit of a genuine soldier!" said the redcoat, with an air of admiration. "You seem to be a brave young fellow, so it is with genuine sorrow that I tell you that you will be taken to the encampment a prisoner, and that you will within a few hours be either shot or hung for the spy which you undoubtedly are!"

"So be it!" said Bob, calmly. "I think I can promise you that I will die like a soldier."

"Well said, my young rebel friend!—well said! Jennings, bind the youth's arms!"

One of the redcoats advanced and tied Bob's arms together behind his back with a handkerchief.

"Now, then; all ready! Forward, march!" said the leader of the band of redcoats.

Two of the fellows took hold of Bob's arms, and the little party moved away through the timber, going in the direction of the British encampment.

Somehow the prisoner did not seem to be very much cast down.

There was good reason for this.

Dick had escaped capture.

He would be able to go ahead and spy on the British.

Also, he would have the opportunity of trying to effect the rescue of his comrade.

"Poor Bob!" murmured Dick, as he heard the redcoats and their prisoner moving away; "he is in a tight place—but I will rescue him, or die with him!"

CHAPTER IV.

A DARING FEAT.

Dick meant every word of this.

He loved his comrade as dearly as if he were a brother.

He made up his mind to keep watch of the British during the rest of the day, and then combine the work, during the coming night, with trying to rescue Bob.

This would, he was sure, be the best plan.

Had he thought Bob would be in immediate danger of being executed as a spy, he would have hastened back to the patriot encampment, gathered the "Liberty Boys" about him, and made his way back to the British encampment with the intention of making a desperate effort to save his comrade; but he did not think Bob was in any immediate danger.

So he could take his time and wait till night to try to rescue Bob.

Dick watched, and a few minutes later he saw the redcoats emerge from the timber with Bob in their midst, and enter the camp of the British.

Dick saw that the entrance with the prisoner created considerable excitement.

Soldiers came hurrying forward from all directions to take a look.

At last Bob was taken into a tent at the farther side of the encampment.

Dick made especial note of the tent.

"I must remember that!" he thought; "I only hope they will keep him there, and not take him on back to the other division of the army!"

The other division referred to was that of Cornwallis, which was about a mile farther to the north and west.

Dick remained at his post all the rest of the day.

He kept close watch of the British.

He saw everything that was done.

Then, when the sun was setting, he made his way down out of the tree, and struck out in an easterly direction, toward the Brandywine.

Half an hour later he was at the ford where he had had the encounter with the redcoat.

He crossed quickly, and turning, made his way southward along the bank of the creek.

Fifteen minutes later he entered the main encampment of the patriot army.

He made his way at once to General Washington's headquarters.

The commander-in-chief greeted him pleasantly.

"Well, Dick, my boy, what is the news?" he asked, eagerly. "Have the British made any decided move since you were here before?"

"No, your excellency; there has been considerable stir, however. It looks as if they are preparing for some important move."

"No doubt you are right, my boy. Well, I shall send out double the usual number of scouts to-night, and instruct them to watch the British very closely. They may attempt a movement of some kind to-night."

"Yes, indeed, your excellency. I shall be on duty, too."

"Perhaps you had better rest, Dick; you were on duty nearly all of last night."

"I am not tired or sleepy, your excellency, and if I were, it would make no difference. I have an important duty to perform."

"What, Dick?"

"The rescue of my comrade, Bob Estabrook."

"His rescue?"

"Yes, your excellency; he was captured by the British to-day."

"Too bad, too bad! How did it happen?"

Dick told the particulars of how Bob came to be captured.

The commander-in-chief listened with interest.

When Dick told of the noble manner in which Bob had made a sacrifice of himself, to insure Dick's escape, General Washington's eyes sparkled.

"A brave youth, a noble youth!" he said. "But," he added, shaking his head, "I fear you will find it an impossibility to rescue him."

"Maybe so, your excellency; I am going to make the attempt at any rate. I love Bob as if he were my brother, and I will rescue him if it is possible to do so. Were our positions reversed, I know he would risk his life in order to rescue me."

"I have no doubt of it, Dick; Bob is a brave and noble
 ar youth. But, be careful, my boy; don't take any more
 chances than you can possibly help. I would miss you
 w greatly if I were to lose you."

"I will exercise all possible caution, your excellency."

d He talked with the commander-in-chief a few minutes
 longer, then bidding him good-by he saluted and withdrew.

He went at once to the point where the company of
 "Liberty Boys" was stationed.

When he told the youths of Bob's capture by the Brit-
 ish, they were greatly excited.

c Bob was a great favorite among them.

D He was always so light-hearted, jolly and good-natured
 fr that they could not help liking him.

He was, in fact, the life of the company.

c When Dick told them that he was going to try to rescue
 Bob, they were delighted.

They one and all wished to go with Dick.

He told them that this would be impossible.

c Bob was a prisoner in the heart of the British encamp-
 ment.

w If he were rescued it would have to be by strategy.

Force would avail nothing.

One hundred men could accomplish no more than one
 man.

Indeed, they could not accomplish so much.

It was Dick's intention to slip into the British encamp-
 oment.

Alone, he might succeed in doing this.

If accompanied by others, this would be impossible.

b He explained this to his comrades.

They readily saw the point.

s They knew Dick was right.

r What could a hundred men do against ten thousand?

Practically, scarcely any more than one man could do.

Dick hastened to eat his supper.

b Then he doffed his citizen's suit and donned a British
 uniform which he had taken from a redcoat prisoner weeks
 before, and which he had made use of on several occasions
 when venturing into the British ranks.

h This would make it lots less dangerous work venturing
 into the British encampment.

o In a large army, say of ten thousand men, the soldiers
 do not have a very extensive knowledge of, or acquaintance
 li with one another, their friendships being confined, as a
 e general thing, to the members of their own company, or at
 most to the members of their regiment.

Dick was well aware of this.

a And he intended to make good use of this knowledge.

Armed with this knowledge, and disguised in the uniform

of a British soldier, he would not hesitate to venture into
 the encampment of the British.

Dick was soon ready.

Then bidding good-by to the "Liberty Boys," he set out.

He made his way northward along the bank of Brandy-
 wine Creek.

A walk of twenty minutes brought him to Brinton's
 Ford.

This was the same ford at which Dick had crossed in
 the daytime.

It was quite dark now, but Dick had little difficulty in
 making his way across the creek on the flat stones.

He was soon upon the other side.

He set out through the timber.

Although it was dark, it was no difficult matter for Dick
 to go in the right direction.

He had become quite familiar with the lay of the land
 in the last few days.

He made his way in the direction of the British encamp-
 ment with unerring precision.

Of course he did not go quite so rapidly as he could have
 done in the daytime, it being necessary to go slower so as
 to avoid colliding with trees.

Three quarters of an hour later, he reached the vicinity
 of the British encampment.

He could see the camp fires blazing.

He could see the redcoats sitting in groups here and
 there while others were walking about.

"Well, here I am," said Dick to himself. "And now
 to get to work."

Dick set his teeth together firmly.

There was no use of delaying.

He might as well get to work at once.

He moved cautiously forward.

The British encampment was located in the timber, but
 at a point where the trees were not very thick.

Still they were thick enough to afford Dick assistance
 in slipping into the camp.

He took every advantage of this.

Of course, he moved forward very slowly.

When once within the encampment, he would be fairly
 secure, but it would be a difficult matter to get past the
 guards.

Dick was well aware of this.

No one knew better than he, the dangerous nature of such
 work.

And it would have been hard to find one more capable
 of doing this work successfully.

Dick stole forward a little at a time.

Whenever a sentinel came near him, the youth would

crouch down behind a tree and wait until the man had passed.

At last taking advantage of what he considered a favorable opportunity, Dick stole quickly across the sentinel's beat and was virtually within the lines.

The task of getting in among the soldiers still remained, however.

This would be the most difficult task of all.

He stole forward a little at a time, until he reached a point only a few yards distant from where a group of redcoats sat.

Dick waited.

At a time like this, patience was a necessary requisite.

It would not do to do anything rash.

Presently Dick's patience was rewarded.

Four redcoats came strolling along.

Dick saw that they would pass within a few feet of where he stood.

He decided that this was his opportunity.

Dick stood behind a tree.

As the four redcoats passed, Dick stepped out from behind the tree and went strolling along behind them.

Dick appeared so quickly that there was scarcely one chance in a thousand that his advent would be noticed.

He was convinced at once that no one had noticed him.

This was encouraging.

Dick felt that he had accomplished considerable.

But his work was only just begun.

He walked quietly along.

To all appearances he was as calm and careless as any of the redcoats.

Naturally, he was on somewhat of a strain, but he did not let this show in his appearance.

He made his way here and there among the redcoats.

He passed hundreds of them.

Occasionally one would give him a glance, but none of them looked at him in a way that indicated suspicion.

Presently Dick came in sight of the tent into which he had seen Bob disappear after having been brought to the camp a prisoner by the British.

He wondered if Bob was still in there.

He hoped so.

It would be a big disappointment should he discover that after all Bob had been taken away.

There was a chance that this might be the case.

It might be that the redcoats had sent Bob over to the other division of the British army two miles distant.

Dick hoped that this would not prove to be the case.

It would cause him a lot more trouble and work.

In fact, it would make it almost impossible for him to do anything toward rescuing Bob.

Among the hundreds of tents, he would not know in which to look to find his comrade.

Dick dismissed fears and forebodings from his mind.

He would be able to determine the matter by actual investigation soon, anyhow.

Slowly he worked his way around toward the tent.

He had marked its location carefully when he saw Bob disappear within it that day, and he was sure that he had picked out the right one now.

He was soon close to the tent.

The front of the tent was toward one of the camp fires.

This would make it impossible for him to approach it from the front.

He would have to go around to the rear.

He sauntered around in that direction.

To his satisfaction he found that it was dark enough back there so that he could remain there without danger of attracting attention.

He slipped up close to the back of the tent.

There he paused.

He listened intently.

He could hear no sound within the tent.

Dick wondered whether or not Bob would be alone.

If he were tied hand and foot, there would be no need of a guard.

Dick hoped, of course, that Bob would be alone.

The only way he could find out would be by investigating.

This would be dangerous.

But the thought of danger would not deter Dick.

He lay down at the side of the tent.

He was careful to not make any noise.

He listened again a few moments.

Still he could hear no sound within the tent.

Dick took hold of the bottom of the tent and lifted it up a few inches.

The point where he raised the tent was right in front of his face, but he could see nothing.

It was darker inside the tent than out where he was.

Dick hardly knew what to do.

There might be a guard within the tent.

In that case if he were to address Bob, it would be fatal.

He must do something, however.

He gave vent to a peculiar, faint hissing sound.

He knew that if Bob heard it he would understand it.

He had used the same signal on various other occasions.

After making the signal, he waited a few moments.

He listened intently and eagerly.
 There came no reply to the signal.
 Dick's heart sank.
 "Can it be possible they have taken Bob away?" he thought. "Jove! I hope not. In that case I will be all at sea."

He made the signal again.
 Again he listened intently.
 As in the former case, however, there came no reply.
 Dick hardly knew what to do.
 He feared that Bob was not there.
 Still, Bob might be bound hand and foot and gagged.
 If gagged, he could not of course answer the signal.
 There was only one way to find out whether or not Bob was there.

This was by entering the tent.
 Dick decided to do this.
 He pushed the edge of the tent higher still.
 This done, Dick started to crawl through.
 He proceeded very cautiously.
 He did this to avoid making any noise.
 For all he knew, there might be a guard in the tent.
 If this was the case, it would be exceedingly difficult to get inside the tent without being heard.
 By exercising great caution he might do so, however.
 So Dick took his time and was very careful.
 After ten minutes of careful work Dick found himself within the tent.

He paused and listened.
 This time he heard breathing.
 It sounded like the breathing of a sleeping person.
 Dick's heart beat more rapidly.
 "Was it Bob?" he wondered.
 He hoped so.
 There was only one way to determine the matter.
 This was by investigating.
 Dick began making his way slowly and carefully toward the spot, toward the direction from which came the sound of breathing.
 He felt his way carefully.
 Presently his hands came in contact with a human form.
 Dick's touch was very light.
 The person might not be Bob.
 In that case, of course, Dick would not wish to arouse the individual in question.
 He felt around with exceeding care and gentleness.
 He made the discovery that the sleeper was not a prisoner.
 At any rate his arms were not bound.

If the individual was not a prisoner, he could not be Bob.

This thought flashed through Dick's mind in an instant.
 He recoiled and started to draw back.
 He was too late.
 His touch, light as it had been, had awakened the sleeper.

Instinctively the awakened individual threw out his hands and grasped Dick.

Dick understood matters now.
 The man was a British soldier.

CHAPTER V.

THE STRUGGLE IN THE TENT.

Dick realized that he was in great danger.
 If the redcoat gave an alarm, it would be impossible for the youth to escape.

Dick was always quick to think and act.
 No emergency ever seemed to catch him unprepared.
 He was usually equal to the occasion.
 It was so this time.
 Quick as a flash he extended his arms.
 His hands found their way to the redcoat's throat with unerring precision.

The struggle began.

Dick had been doing spy work for more than a year, and during that time had been through many dangerous experiences, but it is doubtful if he had ever been engaged in one so fraught with danger as in the present instance.

Here he was in the heart of the British encampment, in a tent and engaged in a struggle with a British soldier.

It was a struggle in which Dick was badly handicapped. To simply overcome the redcoat would not be sufficient. It was absolutely imperative that Dick should prevent the fellow from giving an alarm.

One little cry from the redcoat would bring scores of his comrades to his aid.

Dick realized this.

He was determined that the fellow should not make an outcry.

It was for this reason that he seized the redcoat by the throat.

As soon as Dick's fingers closed around the fellow's throat, his chances of making an outcry were reduced to zero.

He was a powerful fellow, however, and made a game fight.

He gave Dick a lot of trouble.

But for the fact that Dick had got the redcoat by the throat and was thus enabled to choke him into insensibility in a very short time, it is doubtful if the youth could have overcome him at all.

As it was, however, he succeeded.

Two minutes after the struggle began, the redcoat relinquished his hold on Dick and sank back unconscious.

Dick drew a breath of relief.

A great danger had been averted.

Temporarily so, at any rate.

Dick hastily began feeling about him.

His hands quickly came in contact with another human form.

The arms and legs of the individual were bound.

"It is Bob!" thought Dick with a thrill of delight.

He found that Bob was gagged.

He quickly ungagged his comrade.

Then he unbound his arms and legs.

"Are you all right, Bob?" Dick whispered.

"Yes, Dick," whispered Bob, thickly.

He had been gagged so long that he could hardly articulate.

"I have just choked your guard into insensibility," whispered Dick. "I'll bind and gag him and then we'll see if we can get away from here."

Dick proceeded to bind and gag the insensible redcoat.

First he gagged the fellow, and then removing the redcoat's coat, bound his arms and legs.

By this time Bob was able to stand up.

He had succeeded in getting his blood to circulating again.

"How are you feeling now, Bob?" asked Dick.

"Pretty well. But how are we going to get out of this camp?"

"We'll walk out."

"Walk out?"

"Yes."

"I don't see how we can do it, Dick. I would be recognized as being the rebel prisoner, and they will either shoot me or recapture me in a jiffy."

"Not after you have put on the coat and hat of this fellow I have just made a prisoner of, Bob."

"Ah!" breathed Bob.

He understood now.

"That's a good scheme, Dick," he whispered.

He took off his coat and quickly donned the one belonging to the prisoner.

It was too large for him, but would be more effectual as a disguise on this account.

Then he donned the fellow's hat.

It fitted him fairly well.

At this moment the youths heard footsteps approaching.

"Great guns! Dick; somebody is coming," whispered Bob.

"Get over to one side, Bob, and remain silent," replied Dick.

Bob obeyed.

The footsteps came nearer and nearer.

Evidently two persons were approaching.

They were talking as they came.

Dick gathered from their conversation that they were the officer of the guard and a comrade.

The officer of the guard was evidently making the rounds.

The footsteps were now almost at the tent.

The flap of the tent was pushed aside and a man stuck his head through the opening.

"Is all well?" was asked in a hoarse voice.

"All is well," replied Dick.

Dick knew that he was taking chances in speaking.

He had never heard the voice of the redcoat whom he had made a prisoner.

If he succeeded in imitating it, it would almost be a miracle.

He spoke in as hoarse a voice as he could command.

That he had not successfully imitated the redcoat's voice, was speedily made evident.

"What's the matter with your voice, Johnson?" the officer of the guard asked.

"I've caught cold, I guess," replied Dick.

He was afraid this answer would not satisfy the officer of the guard.

But as the fellow could not suspect the real state of affairs he accepted the explanation.

He grunted out something unintelligible, and dropping the tent-flap, he and his companion walked away.

"That was a close call, Dick," whispered Bob.

"So it was; but we are liable to have some more close calls before we get out of this camp."

"I shouldn't wonder but you are right, Dick. Well, when shall we make the break?"

"As well one time as another, Bob. We might as well start right away."

"Lead on, Dick; I'm ready if you are."

"All right, Bob; come on; we'll go out the back way."

They stepped across to the side of the tent.

Pulling up the cloth they crawled under and out.

As soon as they were outside they rose cautiously to their feet.

They were now confronted by a difficult task.

They were almost in the center of the British encampment.

They would have to make their way across to one side and in doing so would have to pass hundreds of British soldiers.

Could they do this without having their identity discovered?

The youths were determined to make the attempt, at any rate.

In fact, they had to make the attempt.

There was no other course open to them.

"Come on, Bob," whispered Dick; "we're going out in the light of the camp fire now. Act and walk as carelessly as you possibly can."

"All right, Dick."

The two started.

They made their way slowly away from the tent.

They kept within the shadow of the tent as long as possible.

Then, summoning all their nerve force, the youths walked forth into the light thrown out by the camp fires.

They did not walk hurriedly.

On the contrary, they took their time.

They walked slowly.

They sauntered along in an extremely careless manner.

They acted just as two redcoats in the heart of their own camp might be expected to act.

They made their way slowly along.

They headed as well as they could toward the east side of the camp.

This was the direction they would have to go after leaving the camp as the patriot encampment lay in that direction.

There is scarcely any doubt that the youths would have reached the encampment without their identity being discovered, and would have escaped without trouble.

But they were not to have it so easy.

Suddenly there was an outcry from the tent which they had left a few minutes before.

"Help! Murder!" cried a voice. "The prisoner has escaped! Help!"

CHAPTER VI.

DICK MAKES AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

"Great guns, Dick!" said Bob, in a low tone. "That redcoat has got the gag out of his mouth, and will raise a general alarm. We are in for it now!"

"True, Bob. Well, we must do the best we can. Look and act as careless as you can and keep on moving toward the edge of the camp."

"Won't they suspect us, Dick, unless we turn around and seem to have our attention attracted in the direction of the tent?"

"Perhaps so, Bob, but we'll have to risk it; we've got to keep on moving, or we won't be able to make our escape."

The two sauntered onward, with their heads turned back over their shoulders.

They acted as if interested in the affair, but not sufficiently so as to cause them to retrace their footsteps.

The redcoats were running toward the tent from every direction.

Several times some of them came very near colliding with Dick and Bob.

On these occasions the excited redcoats eyed the youths rather suspiciously, they thought.

Assuming a nonchalant air which they were far from feeling, the youths paid no attention to the looks, but continued sauntering onward.

Soon the tent was surrounded by a horde of excited redcoats.

"Perhaps we may escape yet," said Dick. "Hold yourself in readiness to make a dash for liberty on an instant's notice, Bob."

"All right, Dick."

The youths kept on their way a little while longer and then they heard a wild outcry.

They saw the redcoats leave the vicinity of the tent and come running toward them.

"We are discovered, Dick," cried Bob.

"I guess you're right. Come on; we'll have to run for our lives now."

The youths leaped forward.

They ran with all their might.

They were yet nearly two hundred yards from the edge of the encampment.

In reaching the edge of the encampment, they would have to pass several hundred British soldiers.

The instant the youths began to run, an uproar went up from the redcoats.

All eyes were on the youths.

The situation of the two brave "Liberty Boys" was now indeed desperate.

Should they succeed in escaping from the camp, it would be a wonderful performance.

"If we can keep them from getting hold of us, we will be all right, Bob," said Dick. "They won't dare shoot at us for fear of hitting one another."

The youths ran with the speed of the wind.

They did not run straight ahead but in a zigzag course.

They had to do this in order to avoid the squads of redcoats.

Time and again the redcoats almost succeeded in getting hold of the daring youths.

And time and again they failed.

Onward the youths raced, drawing gradually nearer and nearer to the edge of the camp.

The redcoats tried to close in on them and surround them, but were unable to do so.

Seeing this, the men at the extreme edge of the camp began forming a line.

Presently the youths dodged the last squad of redcoats, and ran toward the line.

Some of the redcoats in this line had thought to grab their muskets, but many of them had not thought to do so.

The light thrown out by the camp fires was sufficient to reveal this fact to Dick, and he swerved slightly and headed toward a point where the redcoats were armed only with pistols.

As the youths drew near, the redcoats leveled their weapons.

"Halt!" cried one. "Halt, or we will fire!"

"The youths did not slacken their speed.

"Halt!" again cried the redcoat.

Still the youths came on.

"Fire!" the redcoat roared.

As he gave the order for his men to fire, Dick and Bob fell forward upon their faces.

At seemingly the same instant, a hundred weapons spoke.

The next instant the youths bounded to their feet like two rubber balls, and again rushed toward the line.

They had made use of an old trick which they had played successfully before.

They had thrown themselves to the ground purposely, and in this way had escaped the shower of bullets from the weapons of the redcoats.

The redcoats were almost paralyzed with surprise.

The youths had thrown themselves down at so nearly the same instant the shots were fired that the redcoats had felt sure they had riddled the two with bullets.

To see the two leap to their feet now and rush toward them, was therefore a great surprise.

The youths were within a few feet of the redcoat line in a jiffy.

As they neared the line Dick drew his pistols.

When within ten feet of the redcoats, Dick extended the weapons and fired.

Two of the redcoats threw up their arms, and giving vent to cries of pain, fell to the ground.

This made an opening in the British line.

They leaped forward like panthers.

They struck the line where the two men had been who had fallen.

The redcoats tried to close up the gap, but did not have time.

As they came within reach of the redcoats, the youths' arms shot out.

Crack! crack! their fists took the two fellows nearest them, knocking them down.

Then the youths bounded on through the opening in the line and quickly disappeared in the thicker timber where the light from the camp-fires could not penetrate.

The redcoats uttered shouts and yells of rage.

They started in pursuit.

"Catch them! Don't let the rebels escape!" was the cry.

But catching them, that was the question.

"We'll see whether they catch us or not, Bob!" said Dick in a grim tone.

"That's right, Dick," was the reply.

As soon as they got into the timber, where it was dark, the youths had to slacken their speed, as they had to practically feel their way.

They had the satisfaction of knowing that their enemies would have to do likewise, however.

The redcoats kept up a shouting to one another so the youths had no trouble in knowing the whereabouts of their pursuers.

The youths made better time through the timber than the redcoats did, and gradually drew away from their pursuers.

When they could no longer hear sounds of the redcoats, the youths halted.

"Well, Dick," said Bob, "you kept your word, didn't you?"

"About what, Bob?"

"About rescuing me."

"Yes, Bob."

"Jove! I owe my life to you, old man."

"Not at all, Bob. You offered yourself up in the first place to save me from capture, therefore in rescuing you, I have simply evened up the score."

"I don't look at it that way, Dick; I consider that I owe my life to you."

"I don't so consider it, Bob; please say no more about it."

"All right; just as you say, Dick; but what are we going to do now?"

"Keep watch of the enemy."

"All night?"

"Yes; we'll take turn about watching and sleeping."

"All right, Dick."

In a hollow tree not far from where the youths were at that moment, they had that day hidden their army blankets.

They made their way to this tree and got their blankets.

Then they worked their way around to a point near the north end of the British encampment.

Here the youths decided to remain until morning.

Spreading his blanket under a large tree, Dick lay down, while Bob climbed the tree to keep watch of the enemy.

The youths took turns watching and sleeping during the rest of that night.

Everything remained quiet in the British camp.

A little while before daylight, the youths rolled up their blankets, and took them back and placed them in the hollow tree.

"Now, Dick, what is next on the programme?" asked Bob.

"I'll tell you, Bob: I believe the British were getting ready yesterday to make some important move to-day, and we must watch them closely. Now my plan is for you to remain here and keep watch on Knyphausen's division, while I go over and keep watch of the division under Cornwallis and General Howe."

"All right, Dick; just as you say."

So Dick bade Bob good-by, told him to be careful, and not let himself be recaptured, and then took his departure.

He made his way in a northwesterly direction.

He knew exactly where the other division of the British army was encamped.

It was about two miles away.

The youth walked rapidly.

He was about half way to the encampment when the sun came up.

As the sun rose, a heavy fog settled down over the earth.

It was so thick as to make it impossible to see objects at a distance of a hundred yards.

"I don't like this!" thought Dick; "it is just the kind of a morning for strategic moves by an army. It would not surprise me if the British made an attack on our army this morning."

Dick hastened his steps.

Fifteen minutes later he was in the vicinity of the British encampment.

Although he was, as he knew, not more than a hundred yards from the edge of the encampment, Dick could see nothing of the British.

He could hear the faint roll of a drum, however, and knew that the enemy was still there.

He also realized that something was in the wind.

He believed the British were preparing to move against the patriot army.

He soon became absolutely certain of this.

Almost at the same moment when he first heard the faint roll of the drum, he heard, far in the distance, back in the direction from which he had just come, the faint report of firearms.

"The battle has commenced!" thought Dick, with a thrill. "The battle has commenced, and this division is getting ready to move forward to the assistance of Knyphausen's division."

Dick was eager and excited.

He moved up still closer.

He felt that he could do so with safety.

If he could not see the British, they could not see him.

He approached until practically at the very edge of the British encampment.

There he stationed himself behind a tree.

He could now see the British, that is those who were nearest to him.

The soldiers were moving here and there.

It was evident that preparations for breaking camp were being made.

Dick remained at his post and watched closely.

An hour passed.

By this time the fog had lifted somewhat.

It was only partly dissipated, but it had thinned out sufficiently so that the whole of the British force could be seen by Dick.

The youth saw that the army was formed ready to move.

He was greatly surprised by one thing, however.

The army was faced toward the north.

What could it mean? he wondered.

He had expected to see the army facing toward the east.

In order to join Knyphausen's division it would have to go in a southeasterly direction.

As it faced toward the north Dick felt confident that it was not going to join Knyphausen.

If not going there, where could it be going?

It was going to march northward; of this Dick was certain.

But how far would it go?

And why was it going in that direction?

These were puzzling questions.

Dick pondered the subject while he watched the enemy.

Presently the army began to move.

As Dick had expected it moved forward in a northerly direction.

But why was this great army of ten thousand men marching practically directly away from the division which was now beginning an attack upon the patriot center at Chadd's Ford?

This was a question for which at the moment Dick could find no answer.

It might be a feint made for the purpose of enticing the patriots across the Brandywine to attack Knyphausen.

Dick thought this might be the case.

In that event, the British would advance only a short distance northward.

Then they would turn and hasten to Knyphausen's relief and crush that portion of the patriot army which may have ventured across the creek.

Dick moved along through the timber, keeping opposite the British column.

The army was following what was known as the Lancaster Road.

By keeping to this road, the British were enabled to move quite rapidly.

Dick, however, had no particular trouble in keeping up.

His idea was that the British would move along this road perhaps a mile and then swing to the right and turn and go in an almost direct easterly direction to Brinton's Ford and to the relief of Knyphausen.

To Dick's surprise, however, the British kept right on in a northerly direction.

They did not turn when they had gone a mile.

Nor did they show any signs of turning when they had gone a distance of two miles.

Suddenly Dick came to a stop.

An exclamation escaped him:

"Jove!" he exclaimed; "why didn't I think of it before? This portion of the army evidently intends crossing the forks of the creek at Trimble's and Jeffrey's Fords, and then turning southward and coming down and attacking our right flank. Yes; that is the intention, I am sure of it. I must hasten to General Washington with the news."

CHAPTER VII.

"THE LIBERTY BOYS' BATTLE CRY."

Dick did not delay an instant.

He was sure that he had fathomed the intentions of the British.

If he was right, and he was confident he was, it was important that the information regarding this movement

of the British should reach General Washington at the earliest possible moment.

Dick set out at once.

In order to reach General Washington's headquarters, Dick would have to traverse a distance of at least five miles.

He made up his mind to cover this distance in quicker time than he had ever before traveled the same distance.

He struck into a dog trot.

It was almost twice as fast a gait as a fast walk.

Dick had more than once walked four miles in one hour.

He made up his mind to cover the five miles in much less than one hour.

He succeeded.

Forty minutes from the time he started, he was at Washington's headquarters.

Washington greeted Dick eagerly.

He was a man of great discernment.

He read in Dick's face the fact that the youth was the bearer of important information.

"What is it, Dick?" he cried eagerly. "You have something of importance to tell me, I know!"

"I have, your excellency!" cried Dick. "The main portion of the British army is marching rapidly northward toward Trimble's and Jeffrey's Fords. It will cross there and come down and attack our right flank, I am confident."

"I have no doubt you are right, Dick," said the commander-in-chief. "That is the move I feared they would make."

Washington sent for General Greene, who came at once.

The two generals discussed the situation.

It did not take them long to come to a decision.

They were bright, brainy men, quick to think and quick to act when once a decision had been reached.

Washington told Dick to go at once to General Sullivan who had charge of the right wing, and tell him to cross the Brandywine at Jones' Ford and attack the rear column of the army under Howe and Cornwallis—the army which Dick had seen marching northward.

Dick hastened away upon his errand.

Then the two generals began making preparations for a master stroke.

General Greene was to cross the creek at Chadd's Ford and attack Knyphausen's left flank.

Washington, with the main army, would cross at Blythe's Ford and fall upon Knyphausen's right flank.

They would thus have Knyphausen between two fires, and would speedily annihilate his force or cause his surrender.

Sullivan would be able to keep Howe and Cornwallis and

the main army from turning back and coming to Knyphausen's relief.

It was nearly noon before the patriot forces were ready to move.

They were not very well drilled and it took considerable time to get them in shape for making a movement.

Just as General Washington was about to give the order for the forces to move across the creek, a messenger arrived.

The messenger came from an officer in command of a small scouting party of patriot troopers.

He said they had been up in the vicinity of Jeffrey's Ford but that they had seen nothing of the British army.

He had not much more than finished making his report before a second messenger from another scouting party of patriot troopers arrived, and he reported the same thing; they had seen nothing of Howe's army in the vicinity of Jeffrey's Ford.

General Washington was puzzled.

He could not understand it.

He had every confidence in Dick.

He knew that the youth never made a report that was not absolutely correct.

And Dick had reported that the main force of the British was marching northward toward Trimble's and Jeffrey's Fords.

The commander-in-chief thought, however, that the British might have stopped soon after Dick left them and that they were now concealed in the woods, waiting for the patriots to make the very move which Washington and Greene had been on the point of making, viz., to cross the Brandywine and attack Knyphausen.

If this was the case, Howe and Cornwallis would bring their army back on the double-quick and attack the patriots in overwhelming force.

Washington at once sent one of these messengers to Sullivan instructing him to wait and not cross the Brandywine until more positive information regarding the whereabouts of the main army of the British had been obtained.

Of course General Washington did not give the order for the forces under himself and Greene to cross the creek.

If Sullivan was not to cross, of course it would be folly for them to do so.

Washington was now in a quandary.

Not knowing where the main army of the British was, he did not know what to do.

He could only wait as patiently as possible for further information.

The officers in command of the scouting parties of troopers had made a great mistake in sending the messengers

to General Washington, stating that they had not seen anything of the British in the vicinity of Jeffrey's Ford.

The fact of the matter was that these scouting parties had not gone to the ford.

They had stopped when yet a mile away.

Had they gone to the ford, they would have found the British army there.

It had halted and the men were taking a rest in the shade of the trees, while Generals Howe and Cornwallis and their staff officers were at Mr. Jeffrey's house drinking wine which had been stored there for safe keeping by merchants of Wilmington.

When the messenger reached General Sullivan with the message which Washington had sent, he was greatly disappointed.

He had been eager to get across the creek and offer the enemy battle.

Dick was present when the messenger arrived.

Somehow he did not believe that the British had stopped.

He told General Sullivan so when the messenger had departed.

"I am confident the British will cross the creek and come down upon us from the north, General Sullivan," he said "and with your permission I will go up toward Jeffrey's Ford and keep watch for them."

"Very well, Dick, you may do so if you like," said Sullivan. "I hardly think you are right in your views, but it will do no harm to keep a lookout."

"True, sir," said Dick. "I may be mistaken, but if it should happen that I am right, it will be important that you have early knowledge of the fact."

"That is true, too, Dick. Well, go along."

Dick set out at once.

He believed the British would be found somewhere in the vicinity of Jeffrey's Ford.

He could not believe they had given up crossing the Brandywine and coming down and attacking the right wing of the patriots.

He made his way northward as fast as he could.

He was afoot, of course, and he walked as rapidly as possible.

Dick struck the road a little above Birmingham meeting house, and proceeded a distance of about a mile.

At this point there was quite a steep hill.

About half way up the hill was a farmhouse.

Near the road was a well.

Dick was thirsty.

He left the road, and letting down the bars, entered the farmyard.

"May I have a drink?" he asked, as he approached the
 "Indeed, ye may, my boy," was the reply in a hearty
 "Anybody as wears the patriot blue is welcome to
 drink and food, too, at this place."

"Then are you a patriot!" exclaimed Dick, eagerly.
 "I sartinly am! I have no use for King George. I
 think we orter be free and that we will be free."
 "I certainly hope so, sir."

"And so do I. By the way, my boy, I heerd considerable
 shooting away off to the south'ard this forenoon. Have ye
 been having a battle?"

"Part of the patriot army has been engaged in a skirmish
 with a portion of the British army, sir. It could
 hardly be called a battle."

"Wal, I hope ye'll lick 'em good."

While the old man was talking he drew a fresh bucket of
 water, and he now passed a cupful to Dick, who drank
 heartily.

"What be ye doing up here, my boy?" asked the farmer.

"I came up here to watch for the main army of the
 British, sir. It marched northward on the Lancaster Road
 this morning, and we thought it possible the British would
 cross the creek at Jeffrey's Ford and come down upon us
 from the north."

"Ah! I see."

"You haven't seen any redcoats about here, have you?"

The farmer shook his head.

"No, I haven't seen any," he replied, but if the British
 army is coming down from the north and is within a mile
 and a half of here, ye kin see it from the top of the hill
 yonder."

"I'll go right up here and take a look," said Dick.

"I'll go along with ye," said the farmer.

He led the horse to the fence and threw the bridle rein
 over a post.

"Come on," he said. "We'll soon see whether there's any
 redcoats in this part uv the country."

Dick and the farmer made their way up the road.

It was only a couple of hundred yards to the top of the
 hill.

They were soon there.

When they reached the top of the hill and glanced down
 the road on the other side, exclamations escaped both.

"I thought so!" from Dick.

"Thar they air, sure as guns!" from the farmer.

At a quarter of a mile distant was the front end of the
 column of British soldiers.

Dick had been right after all.

He was very glad that he had insisted on being permitted
 to come up here and watch for the enemy.

Had he not done so, General Sullivan would have been
 taken by surprise.

"Back!" cried Dick in a low tone. "We mustn't let
 them see us."

They darted back out of sight.

Too late, however.

A wild yell went up from the direction of the redcoats.

Dick and the farmer had been seen.

"I must get back and warn General Sullivan immedi-
 ately. I fear I shall have a hard task, however, as they
 will probably pursue me on horseback."

"Ye can take my horse!" the farmer exclaimed, eagerly.
 "Thar hain't no better traveler in these parts than that
 horse. Ef ye get a fair start, they'll never catch ye, ye may
 be sure of that."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" said Dick.

They were running rapidly down the road toward the
 farmhouse while talking, and when the farmer told Dick
 he could have the horse, the youth leaped forward and ran
 with the speed of the wind.

"You'd better run to the house and hide," called Dick
 over his shoulder; "if the redcoats see you with me, they
 may shoot you."

The farmer deemed this good advice.

He left the road, climbed the fence, and ran toward the
 house.

He reached the house and disappeared around the corner
 at the same instant that Dick reached the horse.

Dick lifted the bridle rein from around the post, led the
 horse through the gateway and leaped upon the animal's
 back.

As he did so, he heard shouts.

Looking back over his shoulder, he saw half a dozen
 redcoat troopers coming over the brow of the hill.

They saw the youth, and undoubtedly understood what he
 intended to do.

"That's all right; yell," murmured Dick as he urged
 the horse into a gallop. "Yell, if you want to; you'll have
 to do more than yell, if you catch me now."

Dick urged the horse to a still faster gait.

The animal was soon running at its best speed.

Dick was pleased to note that the farmer's praise of the
 horse was not misplaced; the animal was indeed a speedy
 one.

The British troopers were well mounted also.

They were determined to catch Dick if it were possible
 to do so.

They used the spurs on their horses mercilessly.

They belabored the poor brutes with the flat sides of their sabers.

They got all the speed out of the animals that there was in them.

With all their efforts, however, they were unable to gain on Dick.

They held their own, but that was all.

Onward rushed pursued and pursuers.

Seeing that they could not gain on Dick, the redcoats fired several shots at him from their pistols.

They were too far away, however, and the shots did no damage.

Onward raced Dick and a few minutes later he reached General Sullivan.

The redcoat troopers, of course, did not follow Dick to the patriot lines.

They gave up the pursuit when they saw they could not catch him and turned back.

When General Sullivan saw Dick enter the camp in such haste and on horseback, he knew that the youth was the bearer of important tidings.

Dick leaped from the back of the foaming steed, and saluting General Sullivan, said:

"It is as I thought, sir; the British are coming down from the north in force; they are ten thousand strong, and not more than a mile away."

General Sullivan realized that there was no time to be lost.

His army was facing toward the west.

It was now imperative that they should turn and face toward the north, and that quickly.

The British would be upon them in a few minutes.

Sullivan began issuing orders immediately.

He knew it would be no small task to get his men faced around and that they would not have a minute to spare.

The company of "Liberty Boys" had been assigned to Sullivan's division.

Dick was captain of this company and he at once made his way to where it was stationed.

His appearance was greeted with cheers.

The "Liberty Boys" loved their young commander, and now that a battle was at hand, they were glad to have him with them.

They could fight twice as well with Dick to lead them.

Sullivan's entire force was now in an uproar.

Officers were shouting commands; orderlies were rushing hither and thither; every where was confusion.

Gradually, however, order came out of chaos.

The patriot soldiers succeeded in executing the movement and were facing the north.

None too soon was this accomplished, however.

Scarcely had they got in position, before the British Hessians appeared.

Before leaving General Sullivan to join his company "Liberty Boys" Dick had asked permission to take up an advance position.

Sullivan had given Dick permission to do so.

As soon as the British and Hessians appeared in sight Dick gave the command and the "Liberty Boys" moved quickly forward and took up a position by the Birmingham meeting house and in an orchard and a garden near by.

Dick was with those who had taken up a position in the orchard.

Soon the British and Hessians were near enough and Dick gave the order to fire.

Crash! roar!

The muskets of the brave "Liberty Boys" had spoken.

The battle of the Brandywine had begun.

The British and Hessians returned the fire.

They came charging forward with fierce yells.

The "Liberty Boys" never flinched, however.

They loaded and fired as rapidly as they could, and inflicted no small damage upon the British.

A few minutes later the firing became general.

The entire force of the British was rapidly coming up and Sullivan's entire force was as rapidly getting into action.

The British had about two dozen cannon and they were soon brought into play.

The patriots had a number of cannon also, and were slow in replying.

Soon the uproar was deafening.

It certainly sounded like a battle.

That it indeed proved to be a battle, history tells.

The firing from the orchard and from the vicinity of the Birmingham meeting house seemed to give the British more trouble than anything else, and they set to work to kill or capture the patriots who were doing so.

General Howe, with a portion of the troops, moved around to the left so as to approach the spot from the east. General Cornwallis with more troops swung around to the right so as to approach from the west; at the same time the Hessians charged down upon the youth in an attempt to drive them out of the orchard at the point of bayonet.

The "Liberty Boys" fought with such fury, however, that they almost struck terror to the heart of their enemy.

The British had never seen soldiers fight so desperately. They were seasoned veterans themselves, and had

ate fighting on many battlefields, but they had never anything to equal the valor displayed by that little of beardless youths.

course the "Liberty Boys" could not have held the sh in check alone and unaided.

he engagement was now general, and a fierce fire was g poured into the British ranks from Sullivan's entire

his was a great aid in enabling the "Liberty Boys" to attain their position.

General Sullivan sent a messenger to Dick compliment- him on the wonderful work being performed by him- and his brave "Liberty Boys," and telling him to hold position as long as he possibly could; that Washington I soon be there.

tell General Sullivan that we will hold it as long as pos-," Dick said to the messenger, and the messenger de- ed.

and the "Liberty Boys" did hold the position as long as possibly could.

ven after the British were pressing upon them from right and the left, and the Hessians from in front, the ths held their ground for some time.

ttacked at close quarters, they clubbed their muskets n knocked the British right and left.

nd then, suddenly, even while thus sorely beset, the berty Boys" did a wonderful thing.

a wild, ringing cheer went up from their throats, and a upon the air arose the "Liberty Boys" battle cry:

Down with the king! Long live Liberty!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE "LIBERTY BOYS" SPLENDID WORK.

he British were amazed.

hey actually paused in their attack.

The battle cry of the "Liberty Boys" had come to them surprise.

ad coming at such a time, when the youths were almost ounded and overwhelmed, made it doubly surprising. gain the wild cheer went up from the "Liberty Boys' "

nd again it was followed by the thrilling battle cry:

Down with the king! Long live Liberty!"

en up from Sullivan's entire army went a wild cheer.

nd following it, went up the "Liberty Boys" battle cry.

It had caught the fancy of the rank and file of the patriot force, and they shouted over and over again:

"Down with the king! Long live Liberty!"

The British paused but an instant.

Then they rushed to the attack with renewed vigor.

They outnumbered the youths so greatly and were closing in on them so rapidly that Dick realized that they would have to retreat.

If they did not retreat, they would surely be captured.

So Dick gave the order.

The youths immediately began to retreat, but they moved very slowly.

They fought as fiercely as ever.

They contested every foot of ground.

They retreated only rapidly enough to keep the British from getting in behind them and surrounding them and cutting them off from the main force of the patriots.

A more stubborn resistance was never made on a battle-field.

And although retreating, the youths kept repeating at brief intervals their thrilling battle cry:

"Down with the king! Long live Liberty!"

Back, slowly and surely, the "Liberty Boys" were forced.

Back to and past the Birmingham meeting house the youths were forced, and then Cornwallis, who with a large force had swung around to the west, forced Sullivan's left wing to give way.

This was a serious breach.

Sullivan, aided by Lafayette, the noble-hearted Frenchman, did their best to rally their men, but were unable to do so.

While so engaged, Sullivan's horse was shot down under him.

The battle was now raging fiercely.

Bullets were flying thick and fast.

The rattle of the musketry and the roar of the cannon were almost deafening.

Men were falling on all sides.

The center of General Sullivan's force still held its ground.

Dick and his brave "Liberty Boys" had been forced back until they mingled with the other patriot soldiers at the center.

Affairs were rapidly coming to a desperate pass, however.

The British were now on the right and left of the patriot force and in front.

The British outnumbered Sullivan's force greatly.

In fact, their superiority of force was such that it would in most cases have been overwhelming.

The fierce resistance inaugurated by the "Liberty Boys," however, and taken up and kept up by the rest of Sullivan's force, had offset the superiority of numbers to a remarkable degree.

Such desperate resistance, however, was very fatiguing, and the patriot soldiers were almost exhausted.

They could not hope to withstand the onslaught of the British much longer.

Realizing this, General Sullivan gave the order to retreat.

The soldiers obeyed the order willingly enough.

They had made a brave stand, had done wonderful work, but they were almost exhausted and felt that to save themselves, they would have to flee.

They retreated across the road and climbed the fences, cut through the woods and across the pasture.

They went in the direction of Dilworth, a small village, a little less than two miles distant, in a southeasterly direction.

When they were within perhaps half a mile of Dilworth, they came upon a brigade from General Greene's force.

Greene had heard the firing, and he knew what it meant.

He had started at once in that direction.

The soldiers had marched on the double-quick, making a distance of four miles in forty minutes.

They were tired, panting and perspiring, but full of fight.

General Greene formed his lines at this point and rallied the fugitives.

He got the artillery in position so as to enable him to sweep a narrow defile through which the British would have to come to reach them.

General Washington arrived now and assisted Greene in getting things into shape.

They succeeded remarkably well.

They did not get this accomplished any too soon, however.

The British had pursued the fleeing patriots closely.

Indeed, so swift had been their pursuit that the British lines were broken and irregular.

They were coming on the double-quick, but when they reached the defile, they were brought to a sudden stop.

The patriots had opened fire with the cannon.

Grape and solid shot mowed the redcoats down like tenpins.

The British were thrown into confusion.

They fell back.

Cornwallis was at hand, however.

He reformed the lines and again advanced to the attack.

To no avail.

Only a portion of his force had reached the spot.

He had not enough men to do much.

He could make no impression on the patriot ranks.

Cornwallis was a brave general.

He was also an energetic and determined one.

Again and again he tried to break through that line of men in blue.

Again and again he failed.

His men were very tired.

They had marched a distance of eighteen miles since morning, had engaged in a battle and had run a distance of a mile and a half in pursuit of the patriot soldiers.

This on such a hot day as it had been, had proved to be very trying.

They were almost exhausted.

But Cornwallis kept them at it.

And Washington and Greene kept their men at it, also.

The patriots loaded and fired as rapidly as possible and created great havoc in the ranks of the British.

In the very front ranks of the patriots were the "Liberty Boys."

They were as eager for fight as ever.

They did splendid work.

Dick, however, was not with them.

As soon as General Washington had arrived at the spot, he had sent one of his orderlies with instructions to bring Dick to him.

Dick hastened to report to the commander-in-chief.

"Dick," said General Washington, "I wish you to mount a horse and go at once to Generals Wayne and Maxwell at Chadd's Ford and tell them what has happened. Tell them to retreat at once and join us here at the earliest possible moment."

"Very well, your excellency," said Dick. "I will go at once."

Then Dick saluted and hastened away.

He secured a horse and mounted it.

Then he rode rapidly away.

He was headed in a southwesterly direction.

It was about four miles to Chadd's Ford.

Dick was determined to travel the distance in quick time.

He urged the horse to a gallop.

Reaching a road, he struck into it.

He followed this road for a distance of perhaps two miles, and then as he emerged from a strip of timber he

quite a large party of redcoats coming across the
 he redcoats saw Dick.
 they set up a shout.
 hey hastened forward.
 They thought that they could head the youth off.
 Dick urged his horse to a run.
 It would not do to be captured now.
 e was going on an important errand.
 The redcoats quickly saw that they could not head off
 Then they opened fire.
 The bullets whistled all around the fugitive.
 Dick bent low on the horse's neck and urged him
 forward.
 The animal responded nobly.
 He soon carried Dick out of range of the redcoats'
 muskets.
 Seeing that he was safe, Dick waved his hat and ut-
 tered a defiant shout.
 Dick could hear the sound of firing in the direction of
 Chadd's Ford.
 "They must be having a lively battle there," he thought.
 Ten minutes later, he arrived at Chadd's Ford.
 The battle was raging at a lively rate when he reached
 here.
 Knyphausen had been watching closely and had seen
 Greene leave with his men.
 He knew that not to exceed two thousand men re-
 mained behind.
 This was his opportunity.
 Now was the time to strike a telling blow.
 He had five thousand men.
 It ought to be a comparatively easy matter for him to
 take the Brandywine and defeat the patriots.
 He decided to make the attempt at once.
 He stationed his cannon so as to command the opposite
 bank of the Brandywine and then gave the order for his
 men to move upon Chadd's Ford.
 The men did so.
 They advanced rapidly and steadily.
 They reached the bank of the creek, ran down its sloping
 bank and entered the water.
 All this time Wayne's men were pouring in a galling
 fire upon them.
 Scores of redcoats fell and their bodies floated away down
 the stream.
 The water ran red with blood.
 The Hessians were grim and determined, however.

They rushed across the creek and gained the shelter of
 the other bank.

It was at this moment that Dick reached the spot.

General Wayne was waiting for the Hessians to attack
 and was grimly determined to repulse them, or die trying,
 but when Dick reached him with the report that Sullivan's
 forces had been routed and driven back to Dilworth, he
 realized that it was useless to remain longer.

To do so would be dangerous.

The British would soon be between him and the force
 under Washington and Greene and he would be hemmed in
 and captured.

He at once ordered a retreat.

His men obeyed at once.

They did not even dare try to save the cannon, so they
 left them for the enemy.

As Wayne and his men hastened away across the field,
 Dick hastened to where General Maxwell was and told him
 the news regarding Sullivan's retreat.

Maxwell at once gave the order to retreat and he and his
 men were soon hastening across the field behind Wayne and
 his portion of the force.

Dick accompanied General Maxwell.

When they had traversed perhaps half the distance to
 Dilworth, General Wayne's force was suddenly fired upon
 from the edge of a strip of timber.

Dick at once hastened forward and joined General
 Wayne.

Dick was sure that the British concealed in the edge of
 the timber was the force he had encountered while coming
 from Dilworth an hour before.

"There are only about two hundred of them, General
 Wayne," he said. "I saw them as I came over. You can
 easily rout them by charging."

General Wayne had great faith in Dick.

He knew that the youth always knew what he was
 talking about.

So he accepted Dick's statement as true without any
 hesitancy.

He gave the order to charge.

The men rushed forward with cheers.

General Wayne and Dick were in advance, sword in
 hand.

As the men advanced there came a scattering fire from
 the edge of the timber.

It did but little damage and the patriot soldiers paid no
 attention to it.

A few moments later they reached the edge of the
 timber.

The redcoats made a brief stand.

There was a short hand to hand encounter.

Then the redcoats broke and fled.

They were too few in number to offer successful resistance.

Luckily for them, the timber afforded them a secure hiding place, and knowing it was useless to pursue them, General Wayne gave the order for his men to retire.

Then the march was resumed toward Dilworth.

Wayne's and Maxwell's divisions reached the point where the main army under Washington and Greene was holding the British army in check, at about five o'clock in the afternoon.

The battle was still raging.

Cornwallis was something of a bulldog.

He would not give up.

He had started in to try to force his way through the defile, and he was determined to do it, if possible.

Again and again he sent his men to attempt to get through, but each time they were repulsed.

Howe came up with some more men, but even after being reinforced, they could not make a success of the attempt.

It was Washington and Greene and the patriot army against Howe and Cornwallis, and a goodly portion of the British army, and the former were successful.

Washington and Greene and the patriots held their position and kept the British back from three o'clock in the afternoon till sundown.

Soon afterward the firing ceased.

The foes could not see each other and there was no need of firing at random in the darkness.

The battle of the Brandywine was ended.

The patriot army had been defeated.

True, as we have stated, the patriot army had made a decided stand at the defile near Dilworth, and had held the British army in check from three o'clock till sundown, but taken as a whole, the battle of the Brandywine was a defeat for the patriot army.

More than a thousand of patriot soldiers had been killed, wounded or captured.

The British loss had been fully as great, but they had driven Washington out of the strong position which he had occupied and this it was that made the battle a victory for the British.

With the coming of darkness, General Washington called a council of war.

What should they do?

Should they remain where they were until morning, and again offer battle to the British?

Or, should they retreat?

Those were the questions which must be answered in council of war.

General Washington and the members of his staff discussed the situation seriously.

They talked the matter over for an hour or more without coming to any decision.

"If we could only learn something regarding the intentions of the British," said General Washington, "we would know better what to do. But it would be a difficult matter to obtain such information."

"It would be next to impossible, I should say," remarked General Greene.

"I know a person who would not only be willing, but glad to make the attempt to gain some information," said General Wayne.

"You mean Dick Slater," said Washington, in a positive tone.

"Yes, your excellency."

"I knew you could mean no other. I had him in mind myself, and I am more than half inclined to send him on the mission, though I doubt very much whether he would be able to succeed."

"It is worth a trial, your excellency," said General Greene.

"You are right; and I believe I will give it a trial."

General Washington summoned an orderly.

"Orderly," he said, "go and find Dick Slater, captain of the company of 'Liberty Boys.' When you have found him, send him to me."

The orderly saluted and withdrew.

A few minutes later he returned.

Dick was with him.

"Dick," said General Washington, "are you ready to enter upon an exceedingly difficult and dangerous undertaking?"

"I am, your excellency," was the prompt reply. "What is it that you wish me to do?"

"Dick," said the commander-in-chief, impressively, "I wish you to undertake something which, I fear, you will be unable to accomplish. I will say in advance that I shall not be surprised if you do fail; yet I hope you may succeed. I am going to ask you to venture within the British lines, if you can get there, and try to pick up some information regarding their intended movements."

"I will go at once, your excellency!"

"It is a dangerous task, Dick! You must be very careful. Do not take too great chances."

"I shall not take any unnecessary chances, your excellency."

ency; but if I can learn anything regarding the intended movements of the British, I shall do so."

"Very well; go, my boy, and God bless and protect you! I hope you may soon return to us, alive and well, and the bearer of valuable information!"

"I hope so, sir!"

Then Dick saluted and withdrew.

Dick knew he had a dangerous task ahead of him.

The British would be on the lookout.

They would have out double the usual number of pickets, in order to avoid a surprise at the hands of the patriots.

This would make it extremely difficult to enter their lines.

Dick was a youth who never let difficulties stand in the way, however.

The greater the difficulties, the greater became his determination to succeed.

He returned to the point where the "Liberty Boys" were stationed.

He quickly doffed his patriot uniform and donned the British uniform which he had carried all that day strapped to his back.

It was too valuable to be lost.

It had saved Dick's life on more than one occasion when he had been spying among the British.

Bob Estabrook and the other "Liberty Boys" told Dick that it would be impossible for him to get within the British lines, but he said he would try anyway.

Then Bob asked to be allowed to go along.

Dick would not hear to this.

The expedition he was going on was one which would require above all other things, secrecy.

And one person could keep his movements secret much easier than two could.

So he bade the boys good-by and set out alone.

Dick knew that the mouth of the defile at the end next to the British would be closely watched.

It would be impossible for him to get through there and into the British encampment without the fact being discovered that he was a patriot spy.

He decided to give the defile a wide berth.

The defile extended through a sort of ridge or long oval-shaped hill.

The hill was covered with a goodly growth of trees and underbrush.

Dick made his way up the side of the hill, passing several patriot pickets on the way, and soon reached the summit.

He paused here for a few moments.

He listened intently.

He knew that all along the side of that hill and at no great distance from the top, British pickets were posted.

To get past them would require the exercise of the greatest care.

He believed he could accomplish it, however.

He was well versed in woodcraft.

Few redmen of the forest could boast of being superior to him in this respect.

His abilities in this line were of great use to him in such work as he was now engaged in.

It enabled him to succeed where others not so gifted would fail.

Hearing nothing, he set out and moved slowly and cautiously down the side of the hill.

Below, at a distance of perhaps half a mile, he could see the camp fires of the enemy.

When he had gone fifteen or twenty yards, Dick paused again.

Again he listened intently.

At first he could hear nothing.

Then from off toward the right came a low, confused murmur.

Dick recognized it as being the sound of human voices.

"A couple of pickets talking together in low tones," he thought. "Good! I am glad I have located them. By going fairly close to them, I will be enabled to avoid running onto any others."

Dick leaped forward once more.

He exercised the utmost care.

The least noise, the snapping of a twig or any little unusual sound like that would reveal his presence and cause him to be challenged.

This, of course, must be avoided.

He might succeed in escaping capture, but it would cause an uproar and his purpose of slipping into the British lines would be defeated.

Dick made his way along very carefully.

He made scarcely any noise at all.

It is doubtful if he would have been heard had he passed within two yards of a redcoat.

Dick paused and listened every ten yards or so.

He passed within six or eight yards of the two pickets who were engaged in conversation.

He could hear their voices quite distinctly, but could catch only an occasional word.

Dick kept on his way and finally reached the foot of the hill.

Here he paused and, concealed in the edge of the timber, he looked out over the British encampment.

Some of the camp fires were close to the timber, but Dick

was careful to stand at a point where the light of none of the camp fires would reach him.

Dick looked out upon an interesting scene.

There was one peculiar thing about this camp scene.

The soldiers were, almost to a man, either sitting down or lying down.

They had been so exhausted by their hard day's work that, as soon as they got the opportunity, they were only too glad to spread their blankets on the ground and to throw themselves down for much needed rest.

Dick stood and watched the scene for some time.

He was debating the question of how he was to get into the camp without being discovered.

He realized that this was going to be extremely difficult. This, because of the very fact we have just stated.

The British soldiers were all either lying or sitting down.

If he were to walk into the camp now, he could not help attracting immediate attention.

Dick had slipped into British encampments a number of different times, but on all these occasions, there had been a goodly proportion of the soldiers on their feet, walking here and there about the camp, either singly or in little groups.

Under such circumstances he had not attracted attention.

Dick was standing there pondering the situation when he saw a couple of redcoats emerge from a large tent, a couple of hundred yards distant from where he was.

The two walked slowly across the open space and Dick saw that they were coming straight toward him.

The two seemed to be conversing earnestly.

As they drew nearer, Dick saw that they were officers.

Dick hoped that they would come near enough so that he could understand what they were saying.

This hope was soon realized.

The two officers kept on coming and presently they reached the edge of the timber.

They paused at the foot of a large tree.

They were not ten feet from Dick.

He could hear and understand every word that was spoken.

He listened eagerly.

Dick soon became possessed of some interesting information.

He learned that these two officers had just been present at a council of war.

He learned furthermore that four thousand of the British were to start within the hour and march around by a circuitous route, and join the five thousand Hessians under Knyphausen. Then this army of nine thousand men—half of the entire British army—was to march eastward and take

up a position behind the patriot army at a point near Dilworth.

Then when morning came, the British would attack the patriots from both front and rear.

This was indeed a shrewd scheme.

Dick was well aware that if it could be successfully executed the plan would result in the annihilation of the patriot army.

He thought what a lucky thing it was that he had been sent to the British encampment on his present errand.

True, he had not penetrated into the camp itself, but he had passed the picket line and had been so fortunate as to reach a point where he was enabled to overhear this most interesting and important conversation between the two officers.

Without the information which Dick had secured, General Washington might have decided to remain where he was until morning.

This would have been fatal.

Now, however, he would be enabled to act upon the information Dick had secured, and by retreating toward Chester, during the night, would checkmate the move of the enemy and defeat their plans.

Presently the officers ceased talking and sauntered slowly back into the encampment.

"Now," said Dick to himself; "I must hasten back to General Washington and put him into possession of the information which I have secured."

Dick started to turn around to make his way back to the patriot encampment when he was treated to a startling surprise.

He felt himself seized in a strong pair of arms, while a voice at his ears exclaimed triumphantly:

"I have you now, you cursed rebel spy!"

CHAPTER IX.

DICK EARNS PRAISE FROM GENERAL WASHINGTON.

Dick understood the situation instantly.

In some manner one of the British pickets had discovered his presence and had attacked him.

Dick realized that he was in great danger.

He was practically in the British camp.

Between him and the patriot camp was a cordon of British pickets.

If an alarm was raised, it would be almost impossible for him to succeed in getting through this line.

Dick felt that he would have his hands full in handling the one redcoat who had seized him.

If the fellow should raise an outcry and bring others to his aid, Dick would be quickly overpowered.

Dick was very glad that the fellow had not given the alarm.

If he could help it, the fellow would not do so.

Doubtless the redcoat had full confidence in his ability to capture Dick without having to call his comrades to his aid.

Had he been aware of the identity of Dick, however, he might not have been so confident.

Dick did not stand still and allow the redcoat to get a good hold on him.

Instead, the instant he felt himself grasped and heard the fellow's words, Dick broke the fellow's hold and, whirling quick as a flash, seized the redcoat by the throat.

A gasp of surprise, dismay and pain escaped the redcoat as Dick's fingers closed upon his throat.

He was taken as much by surprise as Dick had been when he was seized.

A terrible struggle now ensued.

The two did not make much noise.

Dick did all he could to keep much noise from being made.

He knew that if the other pickets heard the noise of the struggle, they would hasten to the spot.

Then his chances for escaping would be very small indeed.

The redcoat caught hold of Dick's wrists and did his best to tear the youth's grasp loose from his throat.

He could not do it, however.

The harder he pulled at Dick's wrists, the tighter the youth gripped his throat.

Thus the redcoat, unintentionally, aided in reducing himself to a condition of helplessness.

For he was speedily being reduced to that condition.

Dick had a powerful grip, and he was putting all of his strength into the effort.

So tightly was he compressing the redcoat's throat that the fellow could not get his breath at all.

If Dick could only reduce him to a condition of insensibility before the other pickets discovered what was going on, he was sure he would be able to make his way back to the patriot army in safety.

Presently the redcoat began struggling more fiercely than ever.

It was his last effort.

A few moments later he suddenly ceased struggling and sank to the ground limp and seemingly lifeless.

The redcoat was unconscious, not dead.

Dick knew he would be all right again in a few moments.

He must make good use of those minutes.

He must get past the pickets over the hill and back within the patriot lines before the redcoat regained consciousness.

At this instant Dick heard footsteps approaching.

Then a voice called out:

"Where are you, Sam? What's going on down there, anyway?"

It was one of the pickets coming down the hillside.

He had evidently heard the sounds of a struggle and was coming to investigate.

Dick realized that he must get away from there quickly.

Taking a direction diagonally away from that from which the redcoat was approaching, Dick stole away.

Dick made his way as rapidly as he could and yet avoid making a noise.

Should he be discovered and an alarm raised, it would be a hard matter for him to get away.

Again he heard the redcoat call out:

"Hello, Sam! Where are you? What's the matter? Why don't you answer?"

"I'll have to hurry," thought Dick; "he'll find 'Sam' directly and then there will be a great hue and cry."

Dick hastened onward as rapidly as he dared.

He had almost reached the British picket line when he heard a loud yell go up from the point where he had left the senseless redcoat.

"He has found 'Sam,'" thought Dick; "now I'll have to look out."

At this instant, Dick heard exclamations from right in front of him.

They were given utterance to by a couple of British pickets.

"I wonder what's up?" cried one.

"Blest if I know," said the other.

Dick knew.

And he knew it behooved him to get away from that vicinity as quickly as possible.

He was glad the pickets had uttered the exclamations.

It told him where they were.

Now he could avoid them.

Otherwise he would have run right into them.

Veering to the right, Dick stole away, and going in a semi-circular direction, made his way around the two pickets.

By this time, the cries of the redcoat who had found the insensible body of "Sam," had created considerable ex-

citement among the soldiers in that part of the camp nearest the spot.

"There'll be a bigger uproar than that when 'Sam' comes to," thought Dick; "but I hope to be over the top of the hill and out of danger by that time."

Dick was now nearing the top of the hill.

Believing that he had passed the picket line Dick hastened his footsteps.

He was within ten yards of the top of the hill when suddenly a sharp voice cried out:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

Dick made no reply.

The voice came directly in front of him.

Dick leaped away instantly.

He went in a direction at right angles from the course he had been going.

He moved so swiftly that it was impossible to avoid making more or less noise.

Crack!

The picket had fired upon him.

Dick heard the bullet whistle.

It whizzed by, not an inch from his head.

"That was pretty good for a chance shot," thought Dick. "Well, I don't think he can do that good again, so I will keep right on going."

And Dick did keep on going.

He reached the top of the hill, and was soon moving rapidly down the other side.

He had not gone far before he was challenged.

"Halt! Who comes there?"

This challenge was a welcome one.

It came from a patriot soldier.

"A friend!" cried Dick.

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign!"

Dick walked up to within a few feet of the picket.

"It is 'Liberty or Death!'" he said in a low tone.

"Ah, Dick! Is that you?" the picket exclaimed, joyously. "Jove! I'm glad you got back alive."

The picket was a member of Dick's company of "Liberty Boys" and has recognized Dick's voice.

"Yes, it is I, Harry, and I'm back alive," replied Dick.

Then he made his way down into the patriot camp as quickly as possible.

He went at once to the large tent occupied by General Washington.

The members of General Washington's staff were all still there.

Dick had been gone but little more than half an hour and the time had passed very quickly, so interested were they in discussing the situation with the commander-in-chief.

Dick entered the tent at once.

His entrance was hailed with delight.

"Ah, Dick, back so soon!" exclaimed General Washington. "Did you learn anything, my boy?"

"Yes, your excellency," replied Dick.

Then he went ahead and told in as few words as possible, what he had learned.

All listened to the recital with eager interest.

"So, that is your scheme, is it?" remarked General Washington when Dick had finished; "well, we'll just see if we can't checkmate that move. We'll retire to Chester and take up our position there, and when the British close in upon this position, in the morning, they will find us missing."

"They will be greatly chagrined when they find how neatly they have been outwitted," said General Greene.

"So they will," agreed General Washington.

Then he shook Dick's hand heartily.

"Dick, my boy," he said; "you have done splendidly. I am proud of you!"

Dick blushed like a schoolgirl.

"I have tried to do my duty, sir," he said modestly; "and I am glad if I have been able to do work which you consider of value."

"Nobly spoken!" said General Greene. "You are as modest as you are brave, Dick."

And he, too, shook Dick's hand.

The other officers all did likewise, and praised Dick heartily for the good work which he had done.

It was only about five miles to Chester, so there was no need of hurry in starting.

Washington waited until midnight, and then when the camp fires had all died out and there was no light to reveal their movements to the spying eyes of some British picket, the patriot army silently and quietly broke camp and moved away in the direction of Chester.

Next morning Generals Howe and Cornwallis were greatly chagrined to find that their expected prey had escaped them.

THE END.

The next number (29) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' WILD RIDE; OR A DASH TO SAVE A FORT," by Harry Moore.

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